

Jesus Looking at His Own Cross

A Walk with Isaiah

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Isaiah 53:3-8

In this coming five weeks we will take a journey to Calvary. The four gospels have more writings about this time in the life of Jesus than anything else. **The cross and the resurrection are the central themes of the New Testament writings.** **Today we will discuss the Doctrine of Atonement.** There are two ways to look at these events.

The objective understanding means when Christ died on the cross and was risen from the dead, God brought new possibilities for the salvation of humanity from sin and death.

The subjective understanding is, “What does this event mean to me? How does this event transform my life?”

Each week, I will take this theme from the perspective of a different biblical author. Today, we will be **taking a walk with Isaiah**. Our journey to the cross as we walk with the Prophet Isaiah, a prophet who wrote his book a thousand years before the coming of our Lord Jesus to this earth. Many passages in the Book of Isaiah refer to Jesus. However, today we will take some verses from the famous Chapter 53, namely the Suffering Servant.

Who is the Suffering Servant?

Some say, especially Jewish scholars, the Israelites. We find in Isaiah that Israel was representing the servant of God. Jews contend that He is the nation of Israel. Isaiah does refer to Israel as the Lord’s servant, and this servant’s vocation was to be righteous (44:1, 21; 45:4; 53:11; 60:3). Yet the nation of Israel was unrighteous (1:1–20; Rom. 3:9).¹

It’s possible that the Suffering Servant in Isaiah’s famous passage is clearly an individual, for 53:8 distinguishes the Servant from “my people,” that is, Israel.²

Israel failed in being light to the nations. God came to us (incarnation) by sending His son to be the new “perfect Israel”. This man could only be the Messiah (Isa. 9:1–7; 11; 42:1–9; 49:1–7).

Thus, I will look to this passage from the New Testament perspective, from a Christian viewpoint. The Suffering Servant is Jesus Christ himself.

I will take three short songs within this chapter.

The first song:

The Parable of the Ugly Man (3-4)

He was despised and rejected by men;
a man of sorrows,
and acquainted with grief;
and **as** one from whom men hide their faces
he was despised, and we esteemed him not.
Surely he has borne our griefs
and carried our sorrows;
yet we esteemed him stricken,
smitten by God, and afflicted.

In the Old Testament, we find many writers who used this poetic form called **inverted parallelism**.

What do we find here?

-The first theme is that he, the Suffering Servant was despised and rejected by men; at the end we see the same theme, as if He is being smitten and afflicted by God. “God did reject his son as his son took on our sins. It’s the dereliction of the cross. To put it in musical lyrics “the father turns his face away”. It’s part of the hell he experienced for us.”³ Jesus also said on the cross, “My God...why have you forsaken me?”

-The second theme in the poem is that He will suffer sorrows and grief; on the reversed side, we read that this suffering servant will carry **our** suffering and

sorrows. It is not just any suffering. **No, he is carrying my pain and your pain and my sin and your sin.**

The climax of the poem is always in the middle. In this case, we find a **mini parable right in the middle**. Whenever we see the suffix “as” or “like” it means a picture is coming to describe something.

Let us call this parable the **Parable of Ugly Man**.

I remember in the Middle East, there were beggars on the street. Some were poor, some had physical handicaps, and some wore very ugly clothes and tried to arouse the emotions of the people, so they could get some help. Sometimes they would be so ugly that you couldn't even look at them. I remember from my childhood the man who showed his hands that were burned so he could get more money from people. The agony of that man was so enormous that I could not watch him.

How about now, when we see the homeless? Sometimes it is hard to watch them.

Isaiah describes the Suffering Servant as the **ugly man from whom we hide our faces. Jesus, the son of God became the “ugly man”.**

The second song:

The Parable of Sheep Gone Astray (5-6)

But he was wounded for our transgressions;

he was crushed for our iniquities;

upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,

and with his stripes we are healed.

All we like sheep have gone astray;

we have turned—every one—to his own way;

and the Lord has laid on him

the iniquity of us all.

Each song that Isaiah introduces has in the middle a metaphor, a short parable.

First, Isaiah describes how Christ is going to be wounded for our transgressions.

All over the chapter we find this theme: our transgression, our iniquities, our griefs, our sorrows.

Let me describe some of the suffering ----- scenes:

Then they spit in his face and struck him. And some slapped him, ⁶⁸ saying, “Prophecy to us, you Christ! Who is it that struck you?” (Matt 26:67 ESV)

And some began to spit on him and to cover his face and to strike him, saying to him, “Prophecy!” And the guards received him with blows. (Mark 14:65 ESV)

And Herod with his soldiers treated him with contempt and mocked him. Then, arraying him in splendid clothing, he sent him back to Pilate. (Luke 23 :11 ESV)

“Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and had Him scourged” (John 19:1 NASB);

“But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water” (John 19:34 NASB).

The Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all. **Again we see the Christ suffering on our behalf.**

This suffering that is done for us. **But this suffering was healing one. His suffering made us whole.**

Let me give you an example. I have a back problem. If someone comes along and says, “I will carry your bags to help you” that will be very nice. What if someone comes along and says, “I will carry your bags and your back will be healed”? Please notice that His suffering will heal our wounds. WOW.

Questions:

What kind of wounds do you have this morning that need to be healed? Anger, revenge, addictions, hatred, abuse, unfairness... I believe each of us has wounds, many deep wounds that need to be brought to foot of the cross.

In the middle of the song there is a short parable (again starting with “like”) which I will call **The Parable of Sheep Gone Astray**. All these are happening for us: upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way;

What is this chastisement (punishment) that brought peace?

Just as 'covenant of peace' (54:10) means 'covenant which pledges and secures peace' so (lit.) 'punishment (chastisement) of our peace' means punishment which secured peace with God for us. This peace was lost (48:18) by disobedience, and, since it cannot be enjoyed by the wicked (48:22), the Servant stepped forward (49:1) to bring us back to God (49:6). This is what he achieved by his **substitutionary, penal sufferings**. (Tyndale Commentary Isaiah)

Yet, we are like sheep gone each in its way. You know how sheep are not very intelligent animals. Jesus brings peace with God, right relationship with God; yet humanity goes its way refusing that peace with God.

The last song:

The Parable of Suffering Lamb of God (7-8)

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,
yet he opened not his mouth;
 like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
 and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,
so he opened not his mouth.
By oppression and judgment he was taken away;

We read in NT:

"Then they spat in His face and beat Him with their fists; and others slapped Him, and said, 'Prophecy to us, You Christ; who is the one who hit You?'" (Matt 26:67-68).

He did not retaliate to the oppressors.

He did not open his mouth. I wonder why?

My friend pastor Brian Morgan describes the silence of Jesus:

"It was because his silence magnified the horror of his death and the depravity of his executioners. Furthermore, in his silence, Jesus was showing that he was saving his speech for the courts of heaven, when he would stand before the true Judge and Advocate. Silence in the face of

unjust charges forces the accuser to think most carefully about his own depravity.”

One more time we see in the middle a parable, the parable of sheep, the lamb.

Let us look at these last two parables:

On top song ***we are the sheep***; in this song ***Jesus is the sheep***.

Two pictures, the same animal, yet very different.

Here comes the picture of **incarnation**. God became like us, a sheep, yet without sin. God becomes like us so we can understand Him. Not only He becomes like us, but He will also take our sins, our punishment to the cross, so we can have a new chance to return to the Shepherd.

1st Peter we read: **“For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.”** (1 Peter 2:25)

You know the problem is that we can look at these verses and sings from objective perspective. But how about what’s happening in our lives?

What do all these things say to me, to you?

If you think this message is not for you, then there is a problem. I call it problem of pride this can make you blind.

Romans 3:23, **“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”**

You have a choice. You can be the sheep that goes stray.....My Way (Frank Sinatra)
Or you can accept the Suffering Servant’s “cross and resurrection” which can heal you completely. Each of us has choice to make.

Here is my prayer:

Lamb Of God (Twila Paris)

Your only Son no sin to hide
But You have sent Him from Your side
To walk upon this guilty sod
And to become the Lamb of God

Your gift of love they crucified
They laughed and scorned Him as He died

The humble King they named a fraud
And sacrificed the Lamb of God

Chorus:

Oh Lamb of God sweet Lamb of God
I love the holy Lamb of God
Oh wash me in His precious blood
My Jesus Christ the Lamb of God

I was so lost I should have died
But You have brought me to Your side
To be led by Your staff and rod
And to be called a lamb of God

1 <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/devotionals/suffering-servant/>

2 ibid

3 Kevin Kasper